

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. II.

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OPPORTUNITY.

"Would but some fairy lend to me her charm!"

Lately I cried, in a despairing hour,—

"Some mighty spell to nerve my weary arm,
Some 'Open Sesame' of magic power!"

"Or, better still, show but the time and place

Where a brave heart might win itself a name,
And carve a pathway to its lady's grace,
Strown with the blossoms of a fragrant fame!"

Then, as I mused, a beldame crossed my way,
Tottering along, with shrouded, earth-bent
brow:

She stretched a lean hand from her mantle gray,
And said in shaking whispers, "Here and
now!"

"O poor delusion!" then I cried, in scorn:

"Not thus are godlike powers to mortals given.
The Helpers come clad in the strength of morn,
Bright with the lingering radiance of heaven!"

"Nor this the place or hour for mighty deeds,

On this lone way, beneath this tranquil sky:
No foe is here, no hapless victim bleeds,—
We are the only passers, thou and I!"

Silent, she tottered on, but, having past,

A sudden glory seemed to light her way:
White angel-wings sprang from her shoulders
vast,

And fair she shone, as shines the god of day.

A noble scorn shot lightnings from her eyes,

As, fleeing still, she turned her lovely head:

"The gods sent me, in answer to thy cries;

But, once repulsed, I am forever fled!

"Learn to know Fortune ere she pass thee by;
Seize on her coming, for she will not wait!
And know on all thy ways divine things lie,
And every place and hour holds thy Fate!"

KATE HILLARD.

THE MINISTRY OF JOYFULNESS.

"Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet,
and send portions to them for whom nothing is pre-
pared: . . . neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the
Lord is your strength."—NEH. viii. 10.

"For every creature of God is good, and nothing
to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:
for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."
1 TIM. iv. 4, 5.

There are two ways to regard human life.
We may call it a discipline or we may call
it an opportunity. In either case, the ulti-
mate object is to attain to that power which
shall make our human life pass from a pas-
sive experience to an active, creative energy.
The difference which lies between these
views of human life represents the differ-
ence of a man's outlook. He may regard
the world in which he lives as all wrong
and God intent upon its restoration to
order, or he may regard it as all unfinished
and its Creator in process of its enlargement
and completion.

Those who believe the former view speak
much of "the discipline of sorrow," "the
moral uses of dark things": those who re-
joice in the latter view speak rather of "the
ministry of joyfulness."

It is of that "ministry of joyfulness" I
desire to speak now. Men need to be en-
couraged to make them strong in the paths
of virtue. It is the apprehension of this
fact in the adult life of our time that has
unconsciously revolutionized the methods of
instruction for the young, substituting the
aspiration which success holds out to hope
for the terrors which failure dictated to fear.
This one principle has changed the
whole method of education.

Life is for us all a time of education.

We are to be "led out." So, then, in the education of the race, the Infinite Thought, whose word we are, the Infinite Life that has entered us, must do nothing which will leave us spent by the process of education, or less in love with the Teacher and his methods.

Under every dispensation of grief, a human soul feels it is against nature to rejoice because of it, and learns only after long endeavor to rejoice in spite of it. That to which we attain by what we call "the discipline of life" is attained, not because we suffer, but because we are able to overcome the suffering by some higher power than grief. We rise superior to our grief. That which drains our heart of joy has, by the goodness of God, in the compensations of life's experiences, filled the vacant room where joy dwells with a higher, holier love. There is nothing regenerative in suffering. A man would be as unwise to rejoice in a broken limb as to rejoice in a broken tie of human affection.

That great Teacher sent of God to announce the good news which came to be so different when it was known only as a gospel of the sacrifice for sin,—an added sorrow to the griefs of men,—this great Teacher taught, as part of his good news, "the ministry of joy" and the regeneration of human life by the gladness of the children of God. Of him it is said he rejoiced in spirit. Women and children were his delighted companions. He welcomed the ministry of their devoted friendship and love, but forbade their tears, saying, "Weep not for me!" Once, moved by woes not his own, he wept; and it is recorded as a thing unusual and marked. None other could say: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad."

Who can claim to be enlightened by the day-dawn of the consciousness of God, if it is not the man who says, "I know that thou hearest me always," "I am not alone: the Father is with me"?

This is the natural state of the children of God: "the joy of the Lord is their strength." When all human support fails them, they still "have meat to eat" that none can know but themselves. The nourishment of life cannot be estimated in the

terms of its incidents or things external. "Their life is hid, with Christ, in God."

Does this separate them from the joys of common life? So far from doing this, it is the only guarantee a soul can have that common life shall be lifted and glorified. Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused. These very joys, delights, contribute to their gladness. They look out upon the universe about them: above, the world's flight is theirs, for they are the flock the Father leadeth through the pastures of the sky. "He knoweth them all by name. He calleth their host by number: not one faileth." "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and all that dwell therein." From star world to sparrow, from the roar of his cataracts to the cry of his ravens, "not one of them is forgotten before God."

To such a man all things are not yet perfect—complete—in the growing world; but nothing is to be seen which has not its use and function. Each seems to be reaching up,—man and all the lower orders, plants which are

"Set in the earth and
Seek the sun."

Such a soul accepts the joys of human life as a ministry of God for good. It does not take its delights fearfully and by stealth. Such a one rejoices to be alive, and rejoices in all that increases the zest of life. Nothing is common or unclean; for God hath cleaned all, by the baptism of his love at the festival of gladness, for his children.

But some soul will say: This seems a very light-hearted picture to set against the background of our human woes. How about the discipline of dark days? Is there no ministry of suffering?

I answer: No days are dark, except when something has obscured the sun. The sun never obscures in any wilful way its own radiance. I do not believe in the ministry of suffering. There is a ministry of God, in spite of suffering; but there is nothing regenerative in any breaking of nature's laws, and all suffering is such. Who is there would condemn the struggle to reduce the suffering of the world to its lowest terms? If there be no one, then let not any believe God is less pitiful than we. Each strong heart-beat of human love is the far-

off pulsation of the heart of God's great love. He is our joy and love and life; his joy, our strength.

Thus we hope that joy will prevail in its ministry to man, until sorrow shall be no more; that human life history, which began among the growling of wild creatures, will culminate amid the "choiring of cherubim." The individual life, also, which comes in with a sob, will go out with a song.

Human life, as we so often know it,—a cry, a struggle, and a stillness,—shall find the transfiguring power which shall make its opening cry its wager of battle, its onward struggle a conquest of wrong, and its final stillness an eternal peace.

In the maintenance of this faith let us rejoice and be glad; "for this God is our God, he will be our guide even unto death." *T. R. Slicer.*

THE STILL HOUR.

"WHOM BUT THEE?"

Thou Life within my life, than self more near!
Thou veiled Presence infinitely clear!
From all illusive shows of sense I flee,
To find my centre and my rest in thee.

Below all depths thy saving mercy lies,
Through thickest glooms I see thy light arise;
Above the highest heavens thou art not found
More surely than within this earthly round.

Take part with me against these doubts that rise,
And seek to throw thee far in distant skies!
Take part with me against this self that dares
Assume the burden of these sins and cares!

How shall I call thee who art always here?
How shall I praise thee who art still most dear?
What may I give thee save what thou hast given?
And whom but thee have I, in earth or heaven?

—*Eliza Scudder.*

Why do you not rise above your cares?
Why do you stay where you are wrought
upon by the attritions of life? Why do
you not go and walk in the gardens alone?
Why do you not accept the offer of Him
who said, "Cast your care upon me, for I
care for you"? Why do you not go where
you will live in his presence, and behold
his brow, and feel his touch? Why do you
not go where you shall rest in his bosom,
and realize his compassion, and be sustained
by his strength? Why do you not go and fill

again and again the urn of your waning
power from the power of the eternal God,
from which we all sprang? Why do you
not renew your better self at the fountain
of divine love? Why do you not, when
weighed down by the trials and disappoint-
ments which invest you here below, take
refuge in the invisible realm, until you are
able to come back again to your labor and
your drudgery, clad in the garments of
consolation, soothed by the cordial of the
soul, and bringing with you thoughts su-
pernal, angelic, divine, which shall be more
to you than silver, or gold, or counsel, or
sympathy, or friend, or lover?

Our riches are not made up of material
things.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abun-
dance of the things which he possesseth."

Our riches lie above. The eye hath not
seen, the ear hath not heard, neither hath
it entered into the heart of man to conceive,
the things which God hath laid up for those
who love. But, God be thanked, we come
to the border of them. By this divine
power, this yearning aspiration, this quick-
ened imagination, this devout faith, we
enter into heaven, we walk its streets, and
with the blessed throng its temples, and
come back stronger, more patient, more
gentle, more loving, purer-hearted, less
discouraged, to our work, to our suffering,
to everything that God's will has prescribed
for us; waiting for the day to dawn when
we shall no longer see God through the
imagination, through a glass, darkly, but
face to face,—and shall know even as also
we are known.—*From "The Realm of Rest-
fulness," a Sermon by H. W. Beecher.*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

Continued from September Number.

The "Feast of the Passover" was held on the
14th of the month Nisan, and was followed
by the "Feast of Unleavened Bread," begin-
ning on the 15th of Nisan, and lasting seven
days. Properly speaking, these two festivals
were distinct; but, from their close con-
nection, they are usually spoken of as
one.

The duties incumbent on each Israelite

observing the feast were, to come to Jerusalem, and offer a burnt-offering, if possible, on the very first day of the Passover; if not, on one of the succeeding days of unleavened bread. He offered also a peace-offering, the *Chagigah*: this might be twofold,—the first on the 14th, the second on the 15th. The second *Chagigah* was obligatory, the first not. The third obligation was “joyousness”; that is, they were to offer other peace-offerings “with joyous heart,” according to their means. The Paschal lamb was not included in these offerings. For this several friends or members of a household united,—not less than ten, nor more than twenty. The one chosen to represent the whole number carried the lamb to the temple, and himself killed it, one of the officiating priests receiving its blood in a bowl, and passing it on to be poured at the foot of the altar. During this ceremony a sort of service of praise was chanted, consisting of portions of psalms and responses from the people. In one part came the words from Psalm cxviii., “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” The lamb was prepared by the priests, and was then carried away and eaten by the little company of ten or more. They did not, as at first, eat standing, but reposed, dressed in their best garments, to show that they were no longer slaves (who eat standing), but were free and at ease. The left elbow was placed on the table, and the head rested upon the hand.

We are not told anything of the lodging of Joseph and Mary at Jerusalem. It was the custom of the pilgrims either to camp outside the city walls or else to be hospitably entertained by friends within. The simplicity of the Eastern customs made such hospitality no great burden; but there were such large numbers of pilgrims that all could not be provided for in this manner. It would be interesting to know how it was in the present case, since it would supply a link in the story.

However this was, Joseph and Mary set out for home early in the week. It was not obligatory to remain through the whole eight days. Two days were enough to accomplish all that was necessary, though some pilgrims remained until the end. The returning party must have been a large one, since Jesus was not missed for a whole day.

His parents then went back to Jerusalem, and found him in the temple.

As we have noticed, a spacious cloister extended around the whole temple enclosure. The temple proper stood within this enclosure, in the large Court of the Gentiles. This court is said to have formed a square of seven hundred and fifty feet. Chambers for conversation, for eating, and even for sleeping were placed here, apartments for the Levites, etc. Moreover, the members of the temple Sanhedrim, who on ordinary days sat as a Court of Appeal from morning to evening, on Sabbaths and feast-days came out upon the terrace of the temple, and taught. It has always been supposed that it was here, and taking advantage of this opportunity, that Jesus was found. Though it is an interesting incident, there was nothing to render it so extraordinary as has sometimes been supposed. The instruction given by the rabbis on these occasions was in a popular, conversational form. An intelligent youth of twelve (a more mature age in a boy of southern race than at the north) would have opportunities to ask questions without transgressing any ordinary customs; and the Jewish rabbis were disposed to feel interest in any young person of unusual mental gifts.

The opinion has usually prevailed that Jesus remained behind intentionally, without informing his parents of his purpose. Is it not more probable that he did not know of their decision to return before the end of the week? This might easily happen; and, though there is a degree of carelessness in their not informing him, it is not nearly so strange as their setting off without him, which did actually happen. The form of his answer shows surprise at Mary's question, and implies that he thought that they *knew* where he was. “How is it that ye sought me?” Moreover, the somewhat puzzling phrase in the authorized version, “Wist ye not that I must be *about my Father's business*?” has been changed in the revised version to, “Wist ye not that I must be *in my Father's house*?” The Greek words in Luke may be translated in either way, but the new rendering supports better the view here suggested.

Joseph and Mary, to whom the visit to Jerusalem was not a new experience, arranged, almost as a matter of course, to re-

turn as soon as the first two days (when attendance at the temple was necessary) were over. They forgot that they had not explained this to Jesus. When the time came to set out, they probably heard some one say, "The boys have come back from the temple," and thought, of course, that Jesus was with the others. Two nights, at least, must have passed before they found their son. Here is an interesting point. For what became of Jesus during those two nights? Again, however, the difficulty is less than it seems. Perhaps he was invited to sleep in one of the chambers at the temple; or, if he returned to the place where Joseph and Mary stayed at night, possibly in some temporary structure, the numbers of pilgrims still there would prevent his realizing that his own party must be gone, though he would wonder where his parents might be.

Edersheim does not accept the new rendering, though he allows that it is the one preferred by most modern commentators. One of his objections is that no one would be surprised at a Jewish child using the expression "my Father's house" in speaking of the temple. But was it this that they "understood not"? Was it not rather that with the preconceived idea that he knew they were going home, and had stayed behind on purpose (which was their own mistake), they did not at the minute understand his answer?

Luke seems to have asked eagerly for more stories of the youth of Jesus after writing down this anecdote; but Mary, alas! had no more to tell: she could only say, like any nineteenth-century mother, how good, bright, and beautiful Jesus was, and that every one that saw him was struck by his rare qualities. These are not the words reported, but it would be our way of expressing the same idea in English.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

WHAT SHALL WE PLAY TO-DAY?

The steel rings and half-rings which constitute the ninth gift of the series should be very welcome in the nursery. A moment's reflection will serve to remind any one that many beautiful forms may be represented by them, arithmetical operations may be

carried on, and also a game of skill evolved for children who have not parlor croquet or kindred games. By fixing a long slim rod upright upon floor or table, and throwing the rings over it according to those multifarious rules so dear to children, a game is instituted which ought to amuse the little folk for a long time.

When I mention *drawing*, I realize that I stand before a broad and difficult subject. Perhaps it is fortunate for me that we are to consider it merely as a source of amusement. The material may be blackboard, slate, or paper, the instrument chalk, slate, or lead-pencil. If a blackboard, it should be grooved in inch squares; if a slate, in quarter-inch squares; if paper, "cross-section" quarter-inch squares. Such a blackboard as I have mentioned would be an invaluable acquisition to any nursery, but other material may be made available. I recommend quarter-inch cross-section for two principal reasons,—the figures may be made of good size, and the paper is not so apt to try the eyes.

If we would but remember that art is emphatically a *representation* of something we see or have seen, many of the difficulties met in striving after results would disappear. A few very simple rules will prevent many mistakes commonly made by children, and will go far toward making their work satisfactory. The first one must be Froebel's fundamental *law of opposites*; that is, what we do on one side we must do on the opposite,—that is, we must keep our drawing symmetrical. Again, when we are working with perpendicular lines, we must represent *with perpendicular lines only*. The same must be said of horizontal or oblique lines. I would discourage *complete* outlines until considerable skill has been attained, because in attempting them children too often repeat those horrible caricatures with which I recollect defacing a blackboard before the days of kindergarten. I will try to show in my next article how these rules are to be applied.

ANNIE SWAYZE BRECK.

Peace is the proper result of the Christian temper. It is the great kindness which our religion doth us that it brings us to a settledness of mind and a consistency within ourselves.—*Selected*.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.]

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GIVERS AND RECEIVERS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated*, all books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Millet, asking, "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Millet, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Will the clubs of young people who are willing to help us, including all circles, guilds, King's Daughters' Societies, Lend a Hand Clubs, etc., please to read the note from the editor on the last page?

(The secretary again begs her correspondents to write only on one side of the paper, especially when sending lists.)

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline Mass.?

A friend of the Book Club has sent Mrs. Millet a number of copies of the Columbus guide for distribution. Any person who is making a study of the work of Columbus and his successors may receive one by applying to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.

Miss Olive Smith, Centre Moriches, New York, offers "Little Dorrit," by Charles Dickens.

I have about a dozen copies of a book for teaching the English language to children. I am a teacher, and have many text-books not in use, which I should be glad to send to any one who could pay postage. They would answer nicely for home teaching. Address Mrs. W. Kershaw, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Henry C. Weston, The Uplands, Beverly Farms, Mass., will give and send the following books for *girls* and *boys*: "Young Folks' Book of Birds"; "Young Folks' History of Greece"; "Young Folks' History of Germany"; "Child's History of England," Dickens; "The Pathfinder," "The Spy," "Last of the Mohicans," "Deerslayer," Cooper; "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," Creasy; "Arabian Nights"; Grimm's "Fairy Tales"; "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea," Jules Verne; "Round the World in 80 Days," Jules Verne; "Two Years before the Mast," Dana; "Scottish Chiefs"; "Tom Brown's School-days at Rugby"; "Tom Brown at Oxford."

"How we Got our Bible" and "The Old Documents and the New Bible," by J. Paterson Smyth; "The Problem of the Fourth Gospel" and "Self-culture," by James Freeman Clarke (preference given to a minister or a library), also the following novels: "Ivanhoe," "The Abbot," "The Monastery," "Guy Mannering," "The Antiquary," "Rob

Roy," "Waverley," "The Bride of Lammermoor" (Walter Scott), and "The Chaplet of Pearls," by Miss Yonge. Address Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

(Miss Clarke has received a number of applications for "Henrietta's Wish," and suggests to correspondents asking for a book offered especially to young girls that those who mention that they are young girls will receive the preference. Several notes merely say, "Please send me 'Henrietta's Wish.'")

The committee of the Cheerful Letter Exchange connected with the South Congregational Church offers "The Man without a Country" by Edward Everett Hale to a young man or boy applying for it. Address Miss Georgiana Merrill, 34 Linwood Street, Roxbury, Mass.

I have a collection of old school books in good condition, many of them not having been used, such as elementary grammars, language lessons, spellers, and readers sent as specimen copies from publishers, which I will send singly or in bulk to any one who will pay postage or express charges. Address Mrs. W. A. Cram, Hampton Falls, New Hampshire.

I have the following books which I shall be glad to send to any one desiring them: "Dorothy Foster," W. Besant; "The Vicar of Wakefield"; "A Christmas Carol, and Other Stories," Charles Dickens; "Good Luck," E. Werner; "The Lady of Lyons"; one volume of Macaulay's "Critical and Historical Essays"; "The Greatest Thing in the World," Drummond. Also, I shall be glad to send my *Nation* and *Review of Reviews*, after reading, to any one desiring either. Address Miss Cortazzo, Meadville, Pennsylvania.

REQUESTS.

I thank those kind friends who have sent me reading matter. I see no one has asked for the *Political Science Quarterly* or *Magazine of American History*, both of which would be of great help to me. Has any one a standard cook-book, book of art or fancy-work, or some violin music which they no longer need? Yours gratefully, Mrs. Charlotte De Armond, Tefft, Jasper County, Indiana.

Mrs. H. E. M. Allen, Valparaiso, Nebraska, would like "Stepping Heavenward," E. P. Roe's "Knight of the Nineteenth Century" and any of Mrs. A. E. Barr's works.

Would some reader of *The Cheerful Letter* like to send me the *Housewife* each month after she has finished reading it in exchange for the *Ladies' World*? Olive Smith, Centre Moriches, New York.

Will any one who has the *Illustrated News of the World* to give away, please send word to Miss Catherine P. Noyes, Billerica, Mass. She has a list of unsuccessful applicants for her copy which was offered in *The Cheerful Letter*.

A Bible with large print is asked for by Mrs. M. A. Smith, care of Edgar Bass, Morgan City, Louisiana.

Mrs. Julia M. Ashley, Deerfield, Mass., asks for "Stepping Heavenward."

Margaret Hodson, Salina, Gloucester County, New Jersey, would be glad to receive reading.

Mrs. Ira Green, Sanco, Coke County, Texas, would be glad to receive reading that would be helpful in teaching her children.

Miss Cora Sturges, North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska asks for Greenleaf's "Elementary Algebra and Key."

I would be glad to have the *Harper's Bazar* with pattern sheet after it has been read. I could make it very useful for fancy-work. Also would like Goethe's "Faust." I distribute my reading matter weekly or bi-monthly. I think your mission a beautiful one. Respectfully, Miss J. M. Shaver, Box 67, Albany, Missouri.

A friend has subscribed for *The Cheerful Letter* for me, which I like very much. I have sent my name to the secretary to join the Cheerful Letter Exchange. I should be pleased to have any good reading sent me that you have to spare. Yours very truly, Clara M. Spaulding, Hyde Park, Vermont, Box 2.

I should be very glad to get from the Book Club "The Widow Goldsmith's Daughter," by Julie P. Smith. With many thanks for reading sent me, I am gratefully, Mrs. Mary A. Glenn, Holloway, Person County, North Carolina.

Mr. Albert L. Braband, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, would like to borrow "Life of Mrs. Prentiss" or any religious work of that class. Good biographies and religious writings are

what he especially enjoys. If no one has the "Life of Mrs. Prentiss," he would be grateful for the biography of some missionary. He adds, "Would it be too much to ask the editor to thank through *The Cheerful Letter* for the abundant literature received from kind friends, which has passed many weary hours, and brought so much pleasure?"

(Much of the literature sent to Mr. Brand has been passed on to others.—Ed.)

Through the kindness of some *Cheerful Letter* friend I have received your valuable little paper. May God bless its unselfish mission! How its pages teem with love and sympathy for the unfortunate ones who are poor and sick! I live in the country where sweet charity only appreciates the actual necessities of life, but those of us who love to read feel other wants besides. The necessities we must have, and it takes all our small means to obtain them; and, if the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange friends will kindly send us books, papers, magazines after they have read them, we will be more thankful than I can tell. I have been an invalid for a great many years, and the expense of sickness keeps my husband poor. I have a little boy aged ten, and a girl seven, and baby four weeks old; and, being in such poor health, it makes life very hard for my children, who are compelled to do most of housework, and I should be doubly thankful for picture books and reading suitable for their age.

Will the friends also send reading matter to Miss Rosella Dickey, Rochester, Indiana? She has been a cripple since childhood, and could not attend school like other children. She can read quite well, and enjoys all kinds except scientific reading matter, and is religious. She is too poor to subscribe for papers, and is confined at home with her aged parents, and can get away from home only occasionally as she can ride. Yours truly, Mary K. Dickey, Peru, Miami County, Indiana.

A friend and neighbor has kindly handed me a copy of *The Cheerful Letter*. I am specially impressed with the book and magazine club: 'twill verily prove a god-send to this community. The nice books she and her children have received embolden me to enroach upon your valuable time by lay-

ing my own case before you, hoping to invoke your aid.

I was born, reared, and married in Kentucky. The vicissitudes of war have drifted us to Florida, and left us stranded in reduced circumstances on an orange grove a few miles from Dade City. . . . But specially would I ask your aid in behalf of my little orphan grandson, Ben E. Gray, now in his twelfth year. I think him a child of remarkable promise, being very fond of reading, and specially histories and biographies. Of course, I like a little light reading intermixed, lest he should strain his mind. I have been taking *Youth's Companion* for him several years, which he enjoys very much. I also have a young daughter who would most gratefully receive any crumbs of literature which might fall in her way; but I would not appear grasping. I may be asking too much. . . . With sincere wishes for your success and happiness, very respectfully yours, Mrs. Charles T. Lewis, Dade City, Pasco County, Florida. My little Ben loves natural history very much.

In looking over *The Cheerful Letter* for September, I was surprised to find that I did not send the name of my neighbor. It is Mrs Sara Seifried, South Trenton, New York. She has now another little daughter added to her already numerous family. Mrs. C. E. Ducl, South Trenton, New York. (For farther particulars, see September *Cheerful Letter*.)

Could any one send me the *New York Fireside Companion* for 1888, and *Vickery's Fireside Visitor* for 1892? I have never seen but one copy of the first, and should prefer it, I believe, to any paper I have asked for. I am anxious to become a member of the dear *Cheerful Letter* Exchange. Do you think the *Cheerful Letter* friends would like to remember the poor shut-in on her birthday, October 4? I live eight miles from Alexander City, and get my mail about twice a month. Mrs. E. Jones, Alexander City, Alabama.

"Gentle Measures in Training the Young" I should much love to read.

(To obtain "Gentle Measures," it is necessary to write to the lady who offers it. This letter, being written August 13, could not be printed in the September number (our number goes to press usually by the 10th), and

the October number will not be received in time to send letters to Alabama by October 4. We would suggest November 4 for the birthday; but from another letter, too long to insert, we infer that Mrs. Jones may move from Alexander City.)

Dear Miss Clarke,—A few evenings ago I received the June *Cheerful Letter*, and am so pleased with it, and so grateful to some one for sending it to me. I was so glad to meet four old friends as members of the Exchange, three, like myself, members of the Shut-in Society, and the fourth a King's Daughter. One reading of your delightful paper does not satisfy me. I must read and reread. Like Miss Macy, I, too, do a little crocheting, though only in wool, and so earn a few extra dimes, which I find never come amiss. I am a member of the Baptist church. I very seldom get to church, though we live but a little way from the city. We keep no horse so I do not see town often. I am sure you are doing a grand good work, and pray that your success may soon be an established fact for this year. Yours I. H. N., M. Robinson, Box 11, Iowa City, Iowa.

Some one kindly sent me the August number of *Cheerful Letter*, the first I had seen. I enjoyed it so much that, as soon as I am through with it, shall pass it on to another invalid "shut-in." I should much like to receive "Wide, Wide World," and any other books by same author. If I should at any time have books to send you, do you have a fund for postage or express on books? I should not be able to pay that, much as I desire to do so. I pass on my good things to other shut-ins. Yours truly, Alice E. String, South Manchester, Connecticut, Box 227.

I should also enjoy reading any of George MacDonald's later books,—have read most of his earlier works,—or any from the pen of Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.

(We have no fund for postage on books. It is not needed, as those who give books send them directly to those who ask for them. To send them to us would double both the labor and the expense. See directions under "Book Club.")

I have received the July number of *Cheerful Letter*, and like it very much. I thank the one who is sending it to me. I

am a shut-in, have had spinal disease from childhood. I am a member of the Shut-in Society, and receive all the reading matter that I need for the present. My eyes are very weak, and I am so nervous I cannot read very much; but I shall be very pleased to receive cancelled Columbian postage-stamps, sea-shells, and mineral specimens. I cannot acknowledge articles unless writing material is sent me, as my means will not allow it. Your sincere friend, Miss Lizzie Lowe, Rutledge, Tennessee, Grainger County.

(The following letter was received and sent to us by one of our members:—)

Kind Friend,—I am trying to start a Sunday-school ten miles south of here in the country, and we shall be glad to get all the reading we can, as the farmers are all very poor and not able to buy; and I fear they will have but little, if any, crop this fall. They are very anxious to have a Sunday-school out there; and I feel it is my duty to do all I can for them in this way. If the Unitarian Association will send the books and papers and sermons, I will myself see that they are distributed, and look to the interest of the schools. I am a member of the E. J. Cogswell Alliance of North Platte. We have also a small but very interesting Sunday-school here under the same name, E. J. Cogswell Unitarian Society. I have much interest in the same. July 23 I helped to organize a school on Broyd Island, Government Reservation, supported by our E. J. Cogswell Unitarian Society. There are about twenty-five in number. Will be more, when harvesting is over. It is a settlement of poor people, but they love to work for God. I would like to get the book "Stepping Heavenward."

Yours respectfully, Mrs. Nellie E. Weeks, Box 395, North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska.

Could you obtain a few song books that have been laid aside suitable for a Sunday-school?

(Will our Unitarian friends take notice of this request?)

Dear Invalid Friends and Others,—For ten long years I have been an invalid, confined nearly all the time to my bed, and now can sit up a little and do a little fancy-work. I have been very lonely, as I lost an

only child six years ago; and we have no relatives or old friends living here. My husband is compelled to do farm-work and do what housework we get done. So I am alone in the house nearly all of the time. Still, my trust is in the Lord. He sends us so many mercies.

Can any one help me by sending me some long hair for my work, or samples of flowers or chains or a book telling how to do different kinds of hair-work? I will send journals or other reading to any one to return the favor if stamps for mailing are sent me. Your Christian sister, Mrs. H. Brown, Kinde, Huron County, Michigan, Box 17.

Please accept my warm, loving thanks for the stamps. They help me so much. Yes, I did receive the "Wheeled Chair." I thought you meant a regular chair to sit in. Funny what mistakes one will make. But the stamp-case I do not think I ever received, because I never had any stamps given me except one or two denominations; and you wrote there were some threes and fours. I have not had any mail in ten days. I don't hear of any one going after it (to the post-office). I don't dare to say anything, for some people call it fretting, so I keep my mouth closed, only when my mother is with me. Then I can say to her what I long for.

Please say in the next *Cheerful Letter* that Mrs. E. Hance received "East Lynne." We have lent the number, and I cannot remember names.

(The acknowledgment should be made to the person who sends the book. Of course, if there is no card enclosed, it cannot be done.)

Some people are very fortunate: they are always around when the good things are distributed. So, with the thought in my mind that "an ounce of influence is worth a pound of pure record," I write to you, that you may place me in the way of getting good, and perhaps of doing something in return. There is truth in the words "that, in order to be happy, every one must have something to do, something to love, and something to hope for." Then our own James Freeman Clarke has said that, "to educate the heart, one must be willing to go out of himself, and to come into loving contact with others."

Again he asked, "Do we sufficiently bear in mind the power for good which a single friend may have over us, and the added value, more than of gold and precious stones, which it may give to life and to all its belongings? *and this, too, though thousands of miles may separate us from one another.*" Life itself may be made more beautiful and holy by such friendships. The noble work which *The Cheerful Letter* is doing is unbounded,—the gift of books, and the *letters!*—who does not love to get a letter?—those heart-messages which almost bring us into the presence of the writer. I come to you asking for reading matter. I am so far away that by the time I can send for any that is so freely offered I find I am too late, so I wish to say that I prefer what is called by many "dry" reading,—history, essays, etc.,—though I am not grown so grave and so much of a senior that I cannot enjoy something of a lighter style. So, in the words of an "Olde English Song,"

O for a Booke and a shadie nooke,

Eyther in-a-doore or out,
With the greene leaves whisp'ring overhede,
Or the Streete cryes all about,
Where I may Reade all at my ease,
Both of the *Newe* and *Olde*,
For a jollie goode Booke, whereon to looke,
Is better to me than Golde.

I know it is time for me to write "Finis"; but, as some cynic has said "that the only important thing in a lady's letter is contained in the postscript," I will not sign my name until I write one matter of importance to me,—namely, if the sign comes right, I should enjoy "An Imperative Duty," by Howells; "Sex in Education," by Dr. Edward H. Clarke; "The Afterglow," by Frederic Hinckley. Cordially yours, Elizabeth T. Horton. Address Mrs. H. A. Horton, Martinez, California.

WHAT BOOKS TO GIVE TO INVALIDS.

1. A book sent to an invalid should be printed in good, clear type.
2. It should be of light weight, and not too large to hold easily in the hand.
3. It should be cheerful, and not too exciting.

Few invalids can read books that require *study*; but they want to be brought into re-

lations with the outside world, and to hear of interesting experiences in which they can share by imagination and sympathy, though shut out of actual participation.

A book that combines *all* qualifications for a gift to an invalid is Warner's "Summer in a Garden." It is light, printed in good type (at least so was my copy), full of quiet fun, and pleasant pictures of out-of-door life; but I think there is no cheap edition of this charming book.

With it may be mentioned the fascinating literature that has grown up within twenty-five years, describing birds and out-of-doors rambles,—the books of John Burroughs, Olive Thorne Miller, Bradford Torrey, Frank Bolles, Ernest Ingersoll, Amanda B. Harris, and others. Almost anything by these writers would be read with keen enjoyment by almost any invalid.

Stories and novels come next. It is harder to suggest here, because some interesting novels have sad passages, some are too exciting, and in all fiction the individual taste must be consulted. I recall one book now, I fear out of print, which seemed to me almost perfect as a story for an invalid, amusing without being exciting and without any tragedy: it was "Lords and Ladies." The theme was the camping out of two parties, each on an island, and the adventures that ensued. "Cranford" is very nearly perfect. It is curious that, in recalling it, it seems full of fun; in reading it, we find a vein of pathos. Most of Miss Yonge's books are very readable for invalids. There is a sunny, domestic, wholesome atmosphere in them, so that to read them is like enjoying the society of agreeable, happy people full of life. There is only enough sadness to make them like real life. In Mrs. Whitney's books the cheerful element predominates, and in *some* of Mrs. Stowe's (not "Dred" nor "Uncle Tom").

In another number we will give the names of some good books for children.

SISTER CONSTANCE.

PLANS FOR THE WINTER.

We hope during the coming winter to increase our usefulness in several directions.

1. We propose to each branch of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to select a mem-

ber (either the President, ex officio, or any one else) to meet the Executive Committee, in order to discuss methods of work. We shall endeavor to have these meetings once a month during the winter.

2. We hope that each branch, so far as practicable, will select one or more books which have some standard value, and offer them in *The Cheerful Letter*. One branch might choose, for instance, "Uncle Tom's Cabin"; another, Dr. Hale's "In His Name"; another, "The Schönberg-Cotta Family"; or, one branch might devote itself to giving Scott's novels (which can now be often purchased at reasonable prices); another, Miss Yonge's novels; another, Dickens's or some good book for a boy (as Miss Yonge's "Little Duke"). This, *in addition to* magazines and second-hand books. One of our members has done great good in this way by devoting herself to giving Jacob Abbott's "Gentle Measures in Training the Young" and "Black Beauty." There could not be a better choice. If a mother could have but one book besides the New Testament, she would be wise in choosing "Gentle Measures."

3. We shall make an especial emphasis this winter on correspondence with young people who are remote from schools and libraries, with the object of sending them wholesome books and good magazines. We hope that the younger members of the Cheerful Letter Exchange will form branches for this especial purpose. All clubs, guilds, and circles of young people interested in this kind of work, King's Daughters, Lend a Hand Clubs, etc., are cordially invited to offer their books through our paper, which we make an especial effort to send to remote and lonely regions.

4. We hope that all the friends who are interested in our work will be willing to keep a record of the number of books sent to shut-ins (of every kind, some are shut-ins by ill health and others from other circumstances), and report to our Book Club secretary at the end of the year, so that we may know what we are doing.

5. May we call attention to the directions in the Book Club, which, if better observed, will make all work in this direction simpler and more effective?

MISCELLANEOUS.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or Linden Place, Brookline, Mass.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER."—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

N.B.—Please notice the change in Miss Howe's personal address from Nahant to Brookline; and in Miss Clarke's from Magnolia to Jamaica Plain.

Subscriptions and renewals may be sent to the treasurer as above. The subscription is fifty cents a year.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Millet; and to Miss Clarke only material for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.

Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass., asks for names of subscribers to *The Cheerful Letter* who are willing to send off their copy of this paper to shut-ins or those not able to subscribe for it.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper, in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

We have received a little book called "Childhood's Morning," for kindergarten use in Sunday-school and home, and cordially recommend it to the notice of our readers. It is not a service book, but is intended to help teachers who have not received regular training in kindergarten methods. The teacher does not carry the book to the Sunday-school with her, but prepares herself at home by study. It is by Mrs. E. G. Mumford, and is for sale by the Sunday School Society, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Will any minister who receives this paper assist us by sending to our secretary names of invalids, and of young people living in lonely places without libraries, schools, or means of education, and especially the addresses of the mothers of young families living on ranches or prairies?

One object of the Cheerful Letter Exchange is to send good books and magazines to those who are not able to obtain them, especially to young people,—not only stories and novels, but books that are instructive as well as interesting, and will create a taste for good reading, and gradually may interest the reader in studying history or the natural sciences, and so be an education. Also such books as are helpful to mothers, Jacob Abbott's wise and helpful books of advice about training children, and such a magazine as the *Mother's Nursery Guide*. We need the name of the minister who sends us such addresses as a voucher for the person being really in need of our help and interest. By procuring a list of names during the summer we shall be able in the autumn to distribute them among our members, and especially the clubs and circles of young people who are interested in Cheerful Letter Exchange work, guilds, Lend a Hand Clubs, King's Daughters' Circles, etc. There is a cordial interest felt in this object by many of our young people living in cities, and an earnest desire to share their books and magazines with those who have but few.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly, or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

Send also all notices of *changes of address* to Miss Langmaid. Please do not send these notices to the editor, as it causes delay in the correction.

A more glorious victory cannot be gained over another man than this: that, when the injury began on his part, the kindness should begin on ours.—*Tillotson*.

Death is the justification of all the ways of the Christian, the last end of all his sacrifices,—that touch of the great Master which completes the picture.—*Madame Swetchine*.